

SARALAND

Forget the awards, Chaney wants title for Spartans

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One doesn't need to take a second glance at Saraland's Adam Chaney; they know. They're looking at a linebacker, and not just a run-of-the-mill linebacker either, but one who has established himself in Mobile County and across the state as one of the best high school linebackers around.

But individual accolades are not what Chaney seeks. He wants victories, lots of them. Now, if his talents and his determination help in the accomplishment of the main goal, that's great. But his efforts will always be toward doing what he can for the betterment of the team.

For Saraland head coach Jeff Kelly, that's a win-win situation.

"Adam is a very explosive, very versatile player," Kelly said of Chaney, one of three returning starters at linebacker. "We expect to use him in a lot of ways defensively. I think he can play inside backer, outside backer, and he can put his hand down and rush the passer. He'll probably do a combination of all three of those things throughout the year."

"He really showed the ability last year to win the one-on-one battles against the tackles. He has a really good motor and good quickness to make plays. He's a guy, we may line him up in different places, depending on who we play or depending on the situation. And I think that's what folks will do with him at the next level. But he's an outstanding young man, a great student, loves ball, those kind of things."

Chaney, who offered his verbal commitment to Tulane during the summer, will be a key member of the Spartans' defense. His experience and versatility make him a leader on a unit that produced five shutouts last season and held opponents to a mere 171 points in 15 games.

"We have a good linebacker corps," Chaney said. "I think we've got the best linebacker corps in the state. We have three returning starters and we're just going to help out our other guy over there for us to be the best unit that we can be. Hopefully we'll pick up right where we left off."

Football has always been an attraction for Chaney, who said he has played the game most of his life. He likes all aspects of the game, but noted he especially enjoys Friday nights in Saraland.

"Just the love of the game," he said when asked what drew him to the game originally. "I've always liked sports and been real athletic my whole life. It's always been a part of me as a child and it's stuck with me growing up."

Sometimes it takes a little extra work to reach the goals you have set for your-

self and your team, but that's just fine with Chaney

"It's tough, but like coach Kelly says, it's a tough game that rewards tough guys and you just have to push through it," Chaney said.

A specific memory from last season's Class 6A title game serves to push Chaney every day in practice. He said the memory makes him work harder than he has ever worked before in an effort to make sure he doesn't allow a similar play to happen again.

Asked to recall the moment that stands out most for him from the title game, Chaney didn't hesitate in answering the question.

"The first touchdown by (Pinson Valley quarterback now Auburn quarterback) Bo Nix," Chaney said. "He did a quarterback keeper and I bit on it and he scored. I still remember exactly how it happened. I know what I did wrong and I know how to stop it. It was just one wrong mistake but it cost us a touchdown. I'll be ready for that this year."

In fact, he says the entire Saraland defense will be ready for what it faces this season.

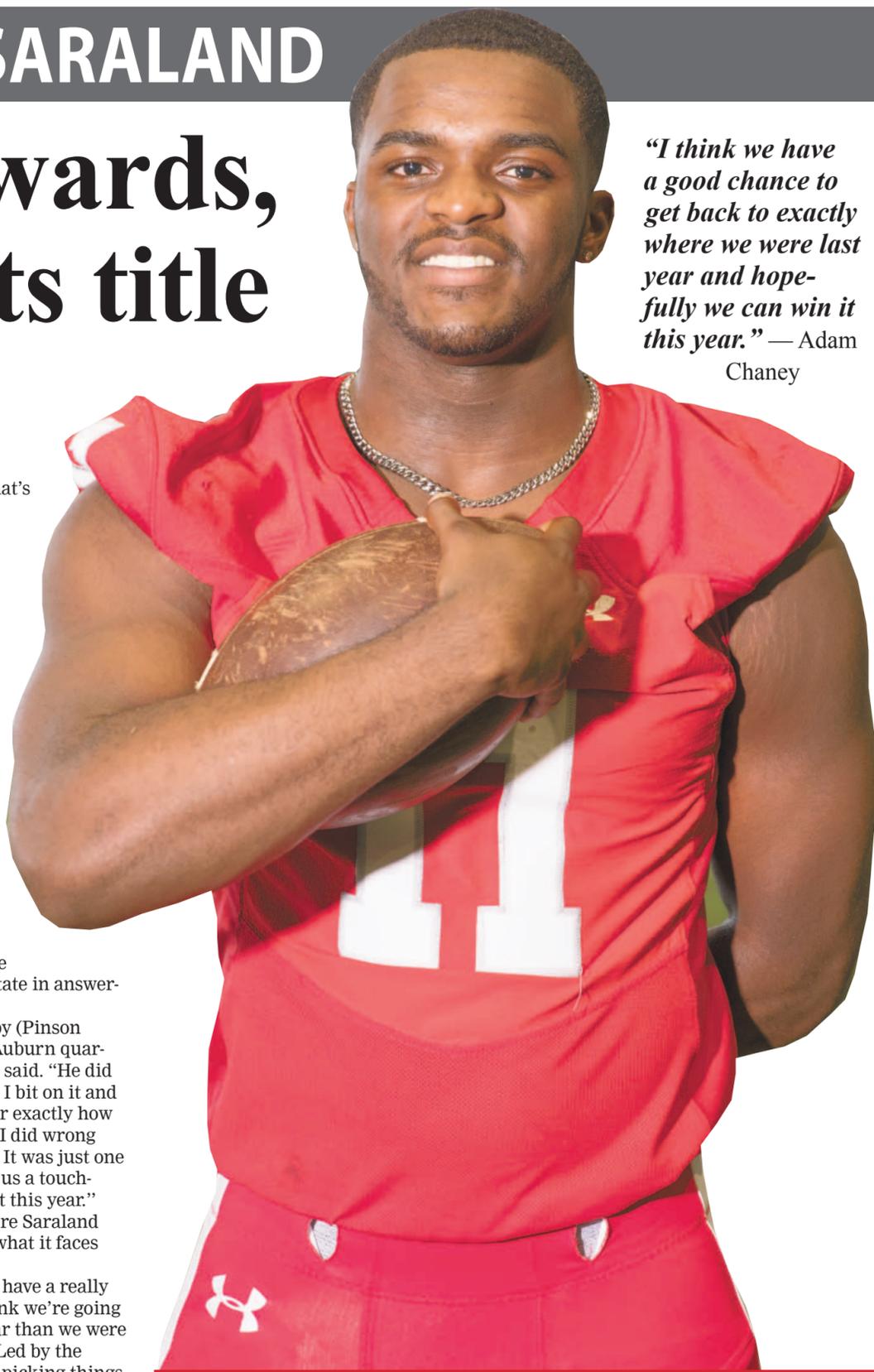
"Our front seven — we have a really good front seven and I think we're going to be a step better this year than we were last year," Chaney said. "Led by the front seven and hopefully picking things up in the secondary and making some plays back there, we're going to be fine. We could be better than we were last year, I think."

All four starters from last season's secondary are gone, which means a new group of starters will take over this season. Chaney says the new starters will put things together and be ready for the season opener on Aug. 23 on the road at Andalusia.

"We've got a lot of young guys back there in the secondary and that puts a lot of pressure on us up front when we have to help them out, but we also have to handle our responsibilities this year. It's just a role that we have to take on and it's part of being a leader on this team."

"I think we have a good chance to get back to exactly where we were last year and hopefully we can win it this year. We've got a good offense and we've got a lot of players on defense who can make plays and I think we're going to be pretty good."

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